

Aruba: The island of Aloes



Page 7

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From graduation boos to voter unease: AI anxiety grows in the U.S.

Washington, United States

Speakers promoting AI are getting booed at universities, voters are rebelling against data centers, and even AI-friendly Trump administration officials are starting to retreat as an artificial intelligence backlash gathers pace across the United States.

The rapid spread of the emerging technology is seeing early enthusiasm give way to concerns about unemployment, rising costs, misinformation and security.

"People are thinking about what their future is going to look like. That existential fear is a very animating anxiety," said Christabel Randolph, acting executive director at the Center for AI and Digital Policy, a Washington-based think tank.

Former Google CEO Eric Schmidt got a taste of that feeling Friday when he was delivering a graduation



Former Google CEO Eric Schmidt speaks at the American Business Forum at the Kaseya Center in Miami on November 6, 2025.

speech at the University of Arizona.

Wearing a black academic gown and a tassel-topped cap, Schmidt urged students not to fear the AI-fueled technological trans-

formation that he said will "touch every profession, every classroom, every hospital, every laboratory, every person and every relationship you have."

Instead of clapping, his

speech prompted loud boos.

- Accept change 'or pay' - According to opinion polling cited by the Semafor news outlet, 70 percent of

Americans think AI is moving too fast, over 50 percent have negative views of it, and just 18 percent of young people feel hopeful about it.

With the U.S. economy battered by stubborn inflation and the tech industry seeing AI-fueled layoffs, young Americans fear their costly university degrees, many paid for with large student loans, will be rendered useless by AI, leaving them without jobs and pay.

When Scott Borchetta, CEO of Big Machine Records, tried to tell Middle Tennessee State University graduates to embrace inevitable change, he too got a hostile reception.

"You can hear me now or you can pay me later," he quipped. "Do something about it, it's a tool, make it work for you."

Booing followed.

- 'Really, really angry' -

AI expansion is driving a massive build-out of data centers and that infrastructure is now becoming a political flashpoint.

Data centers consume large amounts of electricity and can raise utility costs, which has seen local officials supporting AI projects suffering losses at the ballot box in recent months. Some of the discontent has spilled into violence.

Last month, a young man threw a Molotov cocktail at the California home of OpenAI CEO Sam Altman. In a separate incident a few days earlier, a city council member in the state of Indiana had his door struck by gunfire after he expressed support for a data center construction project.

A note the attackers left under his doormat read "No Data Centers." □

Nobel-winning AI giant Demis Hassabis was early Anthropic investor: FT

Washington, United States

The founder of Google's AI lab DeepMind Demis Hassabis was an early investor in US startup Anthropic,

the Financial Times reported on Tuesday.

The disclosure sheds light on the extent of the Nobel Prize winner's influence

over the global artificial intelligence race.

The British newspaper said Hassabis was an "angel investor" in the California-based company known for its Claude model, citing unnamed sources.

Anthropic, a key player in the booming AI landscape, has announced a string of major agreements in recent months as it looks to secure the computing power needed to meet its growing needs.

These include megadeals with Google and Broadcom, Amazon, Microsoft, Nvidia and SpaceX, and an infrastructure investment with Fluidstack.

Hassabis co-founded DeepMind in 2010, which then focused on using artificial neural networks which are loosely based on the human brain and underpin artificial intelligence to beat humans at board and video games. Google bought the company four years later.

In 2016, DeepMind shot to fame when its AI-driven computer program AlphaGo beat the world's top player of the ancient Chinese board game Go. Hassabis was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2024 for pioneering artificial intelligence techniques. □



Google DeepMind CEO Demis Hassabis speaks during a keynote address at Google I/O on May 19, 2026 in Mountain View, California.

As bee population collapses, U.S. apia rists fear research cuts

Baker, United States

In a lot behind a disused West Virginia gas station at the foot of the Appalachian Mountains, Roy Funkhouser is surrounded by about a dozen beekeepers and countless buzzing bees.

This club of apia rists ranging from hobbyists to full-time commercial bee farmers gathers regularly to learn new skills and discuss tricky problems, not least the parasitic varroa mites that plague their hives.

But the group and beekeepers across the country face a new challenge: The government's closure of a key research facility, home to the nation's oldest bee lab that has been at the vanguard of research into bee ills for over a century. Funkhouser, a veteran commercial beekeeper, should have around 1,200 hives under his care. This year, he's sitting on less than 200.

"It's a real struggle," Funkhouser told AFP. "The parasites that we've got now, the mites and everything more viruses and more pesticide exposures, more chemical exposures everything is just more of a struggle today than what it was in the past."

- Catastrophic losses -

He's hardly alone. America's beekeepers are in a bad way.

They lost more than half their bee colonies in the year leading up to April 2025, according to the latest estimates from Apiary Inspectors of America, marking the highest annual loss since the group began surveying beekeepers.

- Mites & Viruses -

"You know, I can sample for a mite count, but I can't sample for mitochondrial DNA," Funkhouser said. "We need the lab for that." Funkhouser is referring to the aptly named "Varroa Destructor," a 1.5mm crab-looking creature that the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) calls "the most serious pest of honey bees inflicting more dam-



Honeybees crawl on the rack of a beehive in Baker, West Virginia, on May 9, 2026.

age and higher economic costs than all other agricultural diseases."

The mites now wreak havoc on American bee colonies by feeding on the insects and spreading a wing-deforming virus.

The mites are also a threat to American crops.

Farmers pay Funkhouser to truck his bees across the country as far as the almond fields of California where they spend around two weeks pollinating crops.

"They'll get a percentage of almonds without [my bees] but not nearly the quantity that they're looking for," Funkhouser explained.

- Farm science -

In his mite battle, Funkhouser has found an ally in Zac Lamas, a researcher at the bee lab within the USDA's Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC).

Lamas's "whole team come down one time, and we sampled everything," Funkhouser said. "They took bees back and grew them in the lab, they cultured all the pollen, the wax, and many, many things."

Lamas and his colleagues then formulate advice to share with beekeepers around the nation.

"It's not that we're working with one beekeeper. We might be working with several million dollars' worth of

colonies, or several million dollars' worth of pollination services that won't ex-

ist because these colonies are at risk," Lamas told AFP between bare-armed lec-

tures at the hives.

But researchers like him may soon be out of job, as the USDA looks to save money by shutting BARC, eliminating labs and redistributing others to facilities across the country.

- Congressional cuts -

A USDA spokesperson told AFP that Congress had reduced agriculture research funding by more than \$32 million "in certain areas," forcing the closure of the storied research center, leaving the fate of the nation's oldest bee lab uncertain.

Lamas argues this is short-sighted.

"The lab is 3.2 million (dollars) a year for 20 plus scientists, and all the work we do," he said. □



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Fans of historic D.C. park wary of Trump plan to ‘beautify’ city

Washington, United States

Every Sunday, percussionists, dancers and everyday residents of the U.S. capital gather in a Washington park for a drum circle, a decades-old tradition that historically celebrated Black liberation.

But some regulars fear the weekly event could come under threat amid U.S. President Donald Trump’s program to make the District of Columbia “safe and beautiful.”

Meridian Hill Park, also known to locals as Malcolm X Park following the Black nationalist leader’s assassination in 1965, has been undergoing major renovations for years.

Much of it is now freshly reopened, but with Trump in office, residents still fear its history will be white washed. “It gives us this anxiety... if they close the park, where can we go to express ourselves and have a community like this, where can our community exist?” said Jalisa Settles-Bey, a 36-year-old mother of six and a street vendor who uses the park.

Settles-Bey sways to the rhythm of the bongos on a recent Sunday in the park but nerves are still frayed. “We’re definitely a little



People enjoy the re-opening of the lower part of Meridian Hill Park after several months of renovation as part of the federal “DC Safe and Beautiful” plan, in Washington, DC, on May 17, 2026.

worried about Trump trying to come in and mess up this park,” said Jesse Bogdan, one of the organizers of the Keep Malcolm X Open Coalition.

Mikey, who is originally from Ethiopia, is one of about 15 musicians gathered on this particular Sunday. He explains how Meridian Hill Park was historically a place for the city’s Black community to gather, and still is, despite rapid gentrification of the area.

“It’s important for the people to gather here and maintain the tradition.”

- ‘Sanitizing the space’ -

Trump’s plan to restore Washington’s parks and give its monuments a bit of a glow-up coincides with the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States on July 4. Billions of dollars have been earmarked for it.

For supporters, it is a long overdue mission to restore

the capital’s luster. But for many residents, it feels like Trump is putting his personal stamp on the city, from his plans for a triumphal arch to a new gilded White House ballroom.

Nearly 90 percent of green spaces in Washington are under federal control, meaning the president has almost free rein to change them to his liking.

Large barriers in the park read: “We are making DC safe and beautiful.”

Setha Low, the director of the Public Space Research Group at the City University of New York, says that in urban areas, “revitalization and beautification has often meant sanitizing the space or making it more secure.”

That can also mean “reshaping who gets to be seen, who gets to gather, and which stories are allowed,” Low told AFP.

Bogdan fears that by cleaning up Meridian Hill Park which is managed and maintained by the National Park Service its history as a place of Black protest and community will be anesthetized. Bogdan said his group fears that the park’s informational signage could eventually be redone to eliminate elements of its history, as the Trump administration moves to remove “divisive narratives” from national sites.

“You don’t make a city safe and beautiful by excluding its people!” he said.

Bogdan’s coalition has gathered 4,000 signatures so far on a petition that slams the lack of public consultation about the Meridian Hill Park project and the possible cancellation of summer events due to construction. □

Los Angeles World Cup workers vow strike over ICE guarantees

Inglewood, United States

Workers at Los Angeles’ SoFi Stadium vowed Monday to go on strike if federal immigration enforcement agents are deployed at the venue when it hosts

World Cup matches next month.

The UNITE HERE Local 11, representing around 2,000 hospitality employees, is demanding federal guarantees that Immigration

and Customs Enforcement (ICE) will not be used in any of the eight World Cup matches scheduled to take place at the stadium. Workers at the world’s most expensive sports arena say that an ICE presence would create a climate of fear for themselves and for fans.

“ICE should have no role in these games,” said Isaac Martinez, a stadium cook, at a protest outside the venue.

“We do not want to live in fear coming to work, or fear being detained going home.”

“If we do not reach an agreement, my colleagues and I are ready to strike,” Martinez added, speaking on behalf of a workforce composed largely of food

and beverage concession staff.

ICE has led the charge in President Donald Trump’s immigration crackdown.

Human rights groups have condemned the agency for its conduct during raids in several US cities, including Los Angeles last year.

In early 2026, ICE agents fatally shot two American protesters in Minneapolis.

Workers on Monday also raised alarms over FIFA’s accreditation process, which requires employees to submit personal data ahead of the tournament, which runs from June 11 to July 19 across the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

“We ask FIFA not to share our information with ICE

agencies, foreign countries, or intelligence services,” worker Yolanda Fierro said. Protesters carrying plastic balls and signs reading “Kick ICE Out of the World Cup” drew high-profile support Monday from Tom Steyer, a leading candidate in California’s gubernatorial race.

ICE’s mandate is border control, the financier-tumed politician said.

“Can anyone explain what that has to do with the World Cup? Nothing,” Steyer said.

“How is it possible that this is the agency that is going to be here when we know in fact they’re an absolute threat, a lawless threat, to workers in California,” the Democratic hopeful added. □



California Gubernatorial candidate Tom Steyer joins SoFi Stadium workers, including cooks, bartenders, dishwashers, servers and cashiers, in a protest outside the stadium, ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup in Inglewood, California, on May 18, 2026.

Love, lust and gnomes as top U.K. flower show bursts into bloom

London, United Kingdom

From gardens to inspire younger generations, to havens of peace and sanctuary, to a hothouse space designed to stir desire, the UK's top flower show is flourishing.

"We've never needed the joy of gardening, the power of plants for our planet or the peace of simply sitting in a garden, more," said Clare Matterson, director of the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), in a statement. Over five days from Tuesday more than 150,000 people are expected to visit the RHS's annual popular Chelsea Flower Show with 30 gardens competing for coveted awards.

Shaking up the normally genteel world of gardening, Aphrodite's Hothouse is described on the RHS website as "the ultimate pleasure garden... lush, fragrant and just a little bit naughty". It's "a theatrical display" of lust and love, designer James Whiting told AFP.

With pendulous or heart-shaped flowers and suggestive, sculptural blooms, as well some discreet sex toys, the indoor garden has stirred some controversy. Whiting dismissed it though, saying "people are excited to see something a bit fresh... and to see the RHS



Designer James Whiting's exhibit "Aphrodite's Hothouse" on the press day ahead of the 2026 RHS Chelsea Flower Show in London on May 18, 2026.

opening the doors to more modern topics".

"Flowers are all about sex. So why not bring that to the Chelsea Flower Show?" he asked, pointing to "a new wave of gardeners" exhibiting at the show.

- 'Hope, regeneration' -

Elsewhere, fallen trees have been carved into a giant sculpture of a sleeping Gaia, or Mother Nature in Greek mythology, emphasising the natural world's power to protect.

"The garden aims to bring to you the potential and the joy in the ordinary," said Sarah Eberle, designer of the Garden on the Edge from the Campaign for Protection of Rural England. After the show, the whole garden including Gaia will be moved to be a communal park for a housing estate in northern Sheffield. Also with an eye on sustainability, the Bring Me Sunshine garden has been designed to become part of the UK's second Eden Proj-

ect, which is set to open in 2028 in northwestern Morecambe.

It is surrounded by a wall made from shell-based waste products: clams, mussels and cockles, and limestone from the coast a recycled alternative to concrete.

The garden is filled with edible plants, such as samphire, making its first appearance at the show, sea kale, and sea buckthorn all plants from the Morecambe Bay coast.

An "important way to connect with nature is using food as that gateway", said one of the designers and keen forager, Harry Holding.

The original Eden Project has pumped £6.8 billion (\$9.1 billion) into the local economy in the 25 years since a clay pit in southwestern Cornwall was transformed into stunning gardens.

It draws about a million visitors annually, and the aim is to bring the same benefits to the impoverished Morecambe, providing jobs and training to young people. This is a story about "hope and regeneration", co-designer Alex Michaelis told AFP.

Further along is the Children's Society garden, a peaceful, informal space for teenagers.

"It's a garden of safety, it's a garden of calm, of protection," said designer Patrick Clarke, describing entering the denser part as moving "into the hug of the garden" allowing the "always-on generation" to reflect and slow down.

He has included smaller plants to show resilience, "little jewels, that just need that little bit of love, that little bit of care that we all need". □

Love and war: supreme leader urges Iran to procreate

Paris, France

In a break from his recent warlike rhetoric, the latest message from Iran's shadowy supreme leader on Tuesday set his people a more productive mission: get out and make babies. Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei was reportedly wounded in the US-Israeli bombardment that killed his father and predecessor and ignited the Middle East war on February 28, and he has not been seen in public since.

But several written messages have been attributed to him and in the latest a letter in response to well-wishes from pronatalists he urged Iranians to se-

cure great power status by growing their population.

"By earnestly pursuing the correct, necessary policy of population growth, the great Iranian nation will be able to play a major role and experience strategic leaps in the future," he posted on social media platform X.

In a longer version of his remarks carried by state broadcaster IRIB, Khamenei told activists: "It is hoped that your sincere efforts... will lead to fruitful results, God willing."

Iran has a population of around 92 million -- less than half that of neighbor-

ing Pakistan and smaller than Middle East rival Egypt but official figures show it is still the 17th most populous nation in the world.

The country's fertility rate has however fallen drastically in recent decades, from 6.5 in 1979, the year of the Islamic revolution, to just 1.7 in 2024, according to World Bank figures.

In 2020, an Iranian health official said state hospitals and clinics had stopped providing vasectomies or handing out contraceptives in order to turbocharge population growth. Despite the damage inflicted by recent US and Israeli air and missile strikes -- and the death of Khamenei se-



Bride and groom couples attend a public mass wedding ceremony at Imam Hossein Square in Tehran on May 18, 2026.

nior and several senior figures Tehran believes it is emerging stronger from the conflict.

Tehran has exchanged proposals for peace negotiations with Washington, but is still demanding sanctions relief and insists on both maintaining control

of the Strait of Hormuz and retaining the right to enrich nuclear fuel.

To maintain this regional leadership role and take "long strides toward building the new Islamic-Iranian civilisation", Khamenei said, Iranians must promote a "culture of child bearing". □

‘Down with the suit’: Mobutu-era jacket makes comeback

Kinshasa, DR Congo

Sewing machines whirled across bold fabrics at a Kinshasa atelier where Congolese tailors and their style-savvy customers have revived a suit long associated with life under a dictator.

The “abacost” has a closed-front jacket, often with a Mao-style collar and worn without a tie, ideal for the sweltering equatorial heat.

It was the signature attire along with his leopard-skin hat of president Mobutu Sese Seko, who began wearing the jacket in the 1970s when Western shirts and ties were all but outlawed.

The authoritarian ruler made it compulsory for civil servants to do the same, as a symbol of national identity and a break from the norms of the former colonial powers.

Even its name an abbreviation of “a basle costume” or “down with the suit” was an act of nose thumbing. After Mobutu was toppled in 1997 following more than three decades in power, the suit fell out of favour, seen as tied to the old elite. Now, nearly three decades later, it is back.

“It’s the trend right now,” said Serge Okasol, one of Kinshasa’s best-known tai-

lors, adding that orders were streaming in from both old and young.

Tucked behind a petrol station in the centre of the Democratic Republic of Congo’s capital, the Okasol workshop is reimagining the suit, stitch by stitch.

After studying fashion in Paris, Serge and his brother Auguy returned home to take over the family business founded by their father.

Ministers, generals, executives and diplomats are now regular customers some order up to 15 suits at once, costing around a thousand dollars each.

- ‘Make it our own’ -

“There are many ateliers like this, but Okasol does it best,” one client told AFP, after picking up a costly order.

Another customer Percy Losso said the most sought-after designs used African fabrics, turning suits into a statement of “cultural identity”.

“We take a classic style and make it our own language,” Serge Okasol said. The modern abacost often features elaborate embroidery or bright patterns, in strong contrast to the understated look of Western suits.

The design starts with the customer, with many bringing ideas inspired by Congolese musicians and influencers who have helped bring back the Mobutu-era suit.

“When you sent me the model on your phone, it had a pointed collar. But here, I’ve gone with a more classic one,” Auguy told a young client, while taking his measurements.

For high-profile events, wealthier patrons commission abacosts decorated with floral patterns or beads.

Others go further, adding their initials or even their own portrait to the jacket. The tailors say they live by one rule: “Express your identity”.

- ‘The real secret’ -

Behind the business, a large hangar hummed with high-end machines imported from Germany and Japan. Around 30 workers took on different tasks, from jackets and trousers to sleeves and buttonholes.

“People here care deeply about the details,” said Serge. “You can judge a suit by its finish.”

A few streets away, rows of cheaper suits from Asia hung from makeshift racks along a muddy road. □



Auguy Okasol poses for a photo wearing a “abacost”, a closed-front jacket, at the Okasol workshop in Kinshasa on May 18, 2026.



Fourth-year Architecture student Alejandro Benitez (R) and industrial designer and ISDI professor Alfredo Rodriguez (L) study during a power cut in Punta Brava, Havana on May 11, 2026.

Lights out for Cuban students as blockade bites

Havana, Cuba

It’s the middle of the night in Havana, but Alejandro Benitez is just getting down to work.

The power is back on for the first time in 15 hours and Benitez, a fourth-year architecture student, needs to get his assignment in fast before the electricity cuts out again.

Desperate times call for desperate measures in crisis-hit Cuba, where a US fuel blockade part of a pressure campaign which Havana fears will culminate in a military intervention has aggravated an energy crisis, leaving people without power for up to 20 hours a day.

In February, the government moved university classes online, part of a raft of measures aimed at conserving electricity.

But distance learning has proven challenging in a country with patchy internet and dwindling power supplies.

Students struggle in fields like architecture, which require regular feedback and direction from instructors.

“Having direct contact with the teacher is really important,” said 28-year-old Benitez, who has to ask all of his questions via WhatsApp or Telegram.

With only one oil tanker mooring in Cuba in the last four months, the situation is rapidly deteriorating.

The government announced that it had run out of diesel and fuel oil needed to power the generators that supplement the output of its seven dilapidated power plants.

And as public transport grinds to a halt, so too have students’ social lives.

Benitez, who cooks over an open charcoal fire, hasn’t left his neighborhood of Punta Brava since February.

- Self-starters required -

Shalia Garcia, a 19-year-old second-year industrial design student, is also struggling to adapt.

Some courses which are central to her degree have been suspended or pared back.

Teachers send around agendas, course material and submission dates for assignments.

Then the responsibility is on the students in a system that requires them to be self-starters.

“This type of teaching puts the onus on the student, which I find hard to manage,” Garcia said.

Even the most zealous pupils face multiple hurdles. The discounted mobile data packages available to students do not have the capacity to download large folders, and it can take time for teachers to respond to questions. □

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Aruba: The island of Aloes



ORANJESTAD—Aloe Vera, a succulent plant species, is renowned for its incredible properties for the skin. It is widely distributed and usually grows in tropical, semi-tropical and arid climates on the planet. But this plant also had a very prominent role in the history of Aruba, and its significance to the island's economy endures to this day.

The leaves of Aloe Vera contain a good amount of gel which when used topically, is great for the skin. Traditionally, Arubans use this gel to treat minor burns and other skin ailments, or just to keep skin supple and looking bright and nourished. Aside from the gel, aloe contains a bitter, yellow substance (called

aloin) which is a gentle but powerful laxative, and it is also the origin of the industry of aloe in Aruba.

Aloe vera was introduced in Aruba around 1840, when most of the island's inhabitants were farmers of little means. Dutch Governor Van Raders introduced the plant after it had been introduced in other islands of the Caribbean to cultivate and harvest the aloe to produce the laxative.

Around 1920, about two-thirds of Aruba was aloe fields, earning our island the nickname "The Island of Aloes."

Under Commander Jan Helenus Ferguson (1866-1871), aloe experienced a

boom, which is why there is a road named after him, which goes through the aloe fields. In the 19th century, Aruba was the main supplier of aloin for laxative, which was imported abroad to the United States and Europe. The aloin from Aruba and Curaçao was known to be one of the best in the world and was more expensive, which meant that at the time, it had significant economic impact, particularly for the local farmers.

However, by the time the oil industry arrived on Aruba, it changed the labor market on Aruba, shifting away from agriculture. It would be after World War II that aloe would make a comeback. And eventually, as science learned about the amazing properties of aloe gel, the industry shifted from producing laxative to producing skin care. An interesting fact is that in 1951, the production of Aruban aloe amounted to around 30 percent of the total global production!

The impact and relevance of aloe is visible all around Aruba. While most homes will have a few plants for personal use and decoration, houses are also decorated with aloe motifs, and at some point, aloe even featured on post stamps. Around 1920, about two-thirds of Aruba was aloe fields, earning our island the nickname "The Island of Aloes." And in 1955, the aloe became a part of Aruba's coat of arms, symbolizing prosperity for the island. □

Images from the archive of the National Library of Aruba.



Beautiful areas around Aruba



(Oranjestad)—In Aruba, there are tons of activities that to enjoy during your visit, but sometimes you just want to slow down and enjoy the view. Here are some beautiful areas on the island that will have you in awe.

The hidden Natural Bridge

Here in Aruba we have three natural bridges and many see this one on thinking that it's the world famous one but it's not. The why is easy, it's way too dangerous to go down the cliff to reach this beauty and no tour companies will do that. Some people refuse to go down due to fear of height. To reach this beauty you must go to San Nicolas and drive up the hill till The Point Lighthouse, park your car and walk until you reach the east point coast and go left along the coastline and good luck going down the cliff.

Surfside Beach

This beach was very famous when we were kids and many locals love to swim at this beach. After some years the locals shifted to the more north-west beaches like Eagle, Boca Catalina and Arashi but after the government renovated the whole area it got a new face lift and its back as a family beach and weekends are just amazing at this area.

Natural Bridge at Blackstone Beach

As mentioned, there are three natural bridges and this one is in the Anrok National Park. The other two Bridges you can visit by car but for this one you must have a 4x4 jeep or you will get stuck at the Andicuri Beach. □





Aruban snacks and where to find them



ORANJESTAD — Want to taste something different for a change? How about some Aruban snacks that you can find all around the island? Hop in your car, and go to these locations to find some of the most popular and tasty snacks that are beloved by our locals.

One of the staples of Aruban cuisine and snacks is

the Pastechi. Pastechi is a Caribbean fried pastry that is filled with cheese, meat, chicken, veggies and sometimes even fish! Or perhaps you might want to try a croquette, locally called a “kroket,” which is a crusty fried snack with typically a meat and dough mix filling. The Aruban kroket is based on its Dutch counterpart, the “bitterbal”.

These two snacks are typically found in all local snack trucks, which can be found all over the island, including on the side of the main road that stretches from San Nicolas to the Hotel Area. You can also find them at local bakeries all over the island. These places may also sell other snacks and sandwiches too, perfect for on-the-road lunch break.

While you’re at it, why not accompany your snack with a refreshing “batido”? Batidos are fruit shakes, typically made with added milk for some creaminess. However, you can also ask to hold the milk. Batidos are commonly found in snack shops too. You may find some batidos along the flea market downtown.

If you are looking for something a bit more fresh and



healthy, why not try some coconuts, or shaved ice from local vendors? These vendors carry their little shop at the back of their truck, so they are ever-moving around the island. However, there are a few spots where you can almost always find a coconut/shaved ice vendor:

- Right next to the Red Anchor in San Nicolas, on the way to Baby Beach.
- Along the main road next to the airport field.

- At the California Light House.
- At the Alto Vista Chapel.

These vendors may also sell other delights, like the beloved coconut-based dessert “cocada” or peanuts. All in all, in Aruba, you can always find some place to take a break and have a bite of something local, you maybe just might have to look for them! □

Photo credit: wheninaruba.com

Conchi: Aruba’s hidden natural pool

(Oranjestad)—Amongst the countless beaches surrounding the island that are well-known and frequently visited, there is an additional “hidden” natural pools that is situated in the northern coast of the island, two ideal stops in your tour itinerary. This is Conchi.

Conchi (Natural Pool)

For many years, Conchi was the only natural pool that we had on the island. Located in the Arikok National Park, near Boca Ke to and the Daimari Ranch, Conchi also known “Cura di Turtuga (Turtle’s Cove) or just Natural Pool is reachable with any 4x4 vehicle or by foot if you’re up for a long hike. However, since it is part of the National Park,

you must first get permission from park management to enter. You would have to purchase a day pass, and receive a wristband as proof of payment. Once you’ve completed that, you are set!

If you decide to hike from the entrance of the Arikok National Park, this is also possible: do bring plenty of protective clothing and enough water and food it could take you up to three hours to hike there!

However, when you eventually do get there, you will be greeted with crystal blue water surrounded by a natural rock formation that protects you from the wild waves on the other side. Though the pool is lo-



cated on the northern side of the island (where the sea is largely rough and largely no suitable for swimming), the pool itself is very calm.

It’s also relatively deep, and you can climb up the rocks and jump in!

Fun fact: “Conchi” means

small bowl in Papiamentu. Once you get there, you may see why we call it that. □

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Keeping up with the conniving spider...

Nanzi fools Cha Tiger

Many years ago, Cha* Tiger did not live in the mondi*, but among civil society. Back then, he was feared by everyone. When he walked past in a halfway, everyone around would make room immediately, that's how ferocious he was.

One night a group of friends was hanging out and they were talking about Cha Tiger. "You know, that tiger sure is incredibly strong and I don't trust him one bit. He probably eats a lot too. Oh, I'm so scared of him!" one person said.

"Oh, don't be stupid! What can Cha Tiger do? He's all bark and no bite, that's it. I certainly am not afraid of him. I bet you guys that I could even sit on his back like I would any donkey." It was Nanzi who said this. The people around him laughed at his remarks, thinking how silly it was for him to say such things.

"You, Nanzi? You are such a liar! He'll stomp you into next Tuesday, stop saying such nonsense."

"I'm not lying!" Nanzi defended himself. "He'll take me all the way to Shon Arei*."

The next morning, Shon Arei already knew of what Nanzi had been saying about Cha Tiger. He was really curious to see if Nanzi was brave enough to put his money where his mouth is.

Cha Tiger walked past.

"Hey, Cha Tiger!" someone called to him. He growled at the person. "Hey, Cha Tiger! Listen!"

"Nanzi made fun of you, said he wasn't afraid of you at all! Said he could sit on your back and that you weren't as strong as we think you are."

Cha Tiger stopped dead in his tracks, furious. "Well, I'll set him straight!" Cha Tiger ran toward Nanzi's house, prepared to teach Nanzi a painful lesson. The entire way there he was growling and yelling, making everyone around aware what was going to happen. They all ran inside and peaked through the blinds to see the fight that was going to unfold.

Nanzi also heard Cha Tiger's screams, slowly getting closer and closer. He was terrified. His face turned pale, and his teeth started chattering like someone with a high fever. Sweat was dripping down his forehead.

When Cha Tiger arrived at Nanzi's place, he stormed in and saw Nanzi's frail body lying face down in the corner. "Hey, how are you, Cha Tiger?" Nanzi asked, his voice trembling. "I heard you were making fun of me in front of your little friends, so I came to hear from your own mouth what you have to say to

me," Cha Tiger retorted, still fuming.

"Me? Talk bad about you?" Nanzi chuckled nervously. "People are such liars, I swear. Can't you see how sick I am here?" Nanzi took a pause, like someone who couldn't breathe properly. In his case of course, it was probably from extreme fear. "Shi Maria* wanted to take me to Shon Arei, where someone can heal me from my illness." Still wrapped up in his act, Nanzi turned back face down. "Me, a father of nine little children..."

Cha Tiger was shocked. Nanzi looked absolutely terrible, God knows he was dying.

"Cha Tiger, you're strong. Could you put me on your back and take me to Shon Arei, I can barely walk," Nanzi pleaded. Cha Tiger took pity on the spider and agreed to do this favor. Nanzi climbed on the tiger's back, letting his body fall down and grabbing on to Cha Tiger's neck. "Would you mind putting a rope in your mouth so I can hold on? That way I can sit up straight," Nanzi asked. Cha Tiger growled in reluctance but said OK. And so they made their way to Shon Arei.

Once they started traveling through the mondi, Nanzi turned to Cha Tiger and said: "These mosquitos are so annoying! Cha Tiger, do



you mind if I cut a piece of branch so I can keep these mosquitos away?" Cha Tiger let him take his branch.

Eventually they made it out the mondi to where everyone else was. Nanzi immediately perked up and whacked Cha Tiger with his branch, making the tiger jump. He ran all the way to Shon Arei's castle. Exhausted, he plumped down in front of His Majesty.

"See, Shon Arei? Cha Tiger ain't nothing but a big donkey!" Nanzi said proudly. Everyone around cheered: "Huray, Nanzi!" Poor Cha Tiger was so embarrassed that he was fooled by the conniving spider, and so he ran into the mondi to hide. To this day, it's said that the

tiger still hides away in the mondi.

Cha: Nickname placed in front of someone's name and can mean anything, like friend. However, it often has negative connotations first.

Mondi: dry wooded areas found on the ABC islands.

Shon Arei: The King

Shi Maria: Nanzi's wife.

Story and pictures are from "Kon Nanzi a Nek Shon Arei (i otro kuentanan antiano di e araña sabi)" by Nilda Pinto.



Article by Etnia Nativa

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Episode CCCLIII - 353

Step Into Aruba's Past Through the Enchantment of Its Rock Art

Aruba is not only a sun-drenched paradise but also a living canvas of human history. Through Etnia Nativa, both readers of Island Insight and curious visitors can journey to the island's heart, guided by its curator—an amateur archaeologist and the island's foremost cultural expert.

In this new weekly episode, we explore the island's earliest human artistic expressions. These were created by prehistoric inhabitants who viewed the world through a cosmic lens, a perspective slowly fading with the dust of time. These artists conveyed their spiritual and social cosmology through stories, which have been captured on our island's rocks and in caves as rock art, leaving behind over 300 expressions across Aruba. Some works are etched into hard stone, while others are painted in limestone caves and on granite boulders. Later generations crafted new symbols in refined clay, creating stunning geometric designs and impressive ceramic pieces. This legacy remains a vital portal into the sacred and everyday lives of Aruba's first inhabitants.

Rock art, practiced for thousands of years across the Americas, depicts stars, animals, spiritual beings, objects, and people. Some researchers even suggest that certain ancient symbols may represent visitors from beyond Earth. Globally, rock art has always carried messages—engraved historical records etched into stone. In North America, the Cooper Bison Skull in Oklahoma dates back over 10,000 years, illustrating the profound time depth of this practice. In Aruba, archaeologists have documented 301 pictographs, including three petroglyphs, across 17 sites. Counting each distinct symbol



"Photograph courtesy of Etnia Nativa"

increases the total to roughly 331 individual representations. Petroglyphs, created by carving or pecking into rock, are less common here than pictographs, which are painted on light-colored surfaces such as granite, quartz diorite, or limestone cave walls. Stylized humans, animals, and geometric objects dominate the island's pictographs, created using pigments derived from soot, minerals, plants, or even blood, in shades of red, orange, white, and black.

The native rock artist—often a mystical healer, herbalist, and color creator—was a central figure in the community. Known as curanderos or curiosos, these artists combined spiritual insight with creativity, continuing shamanic traditions that likely originated over 30,000 years ago dur-

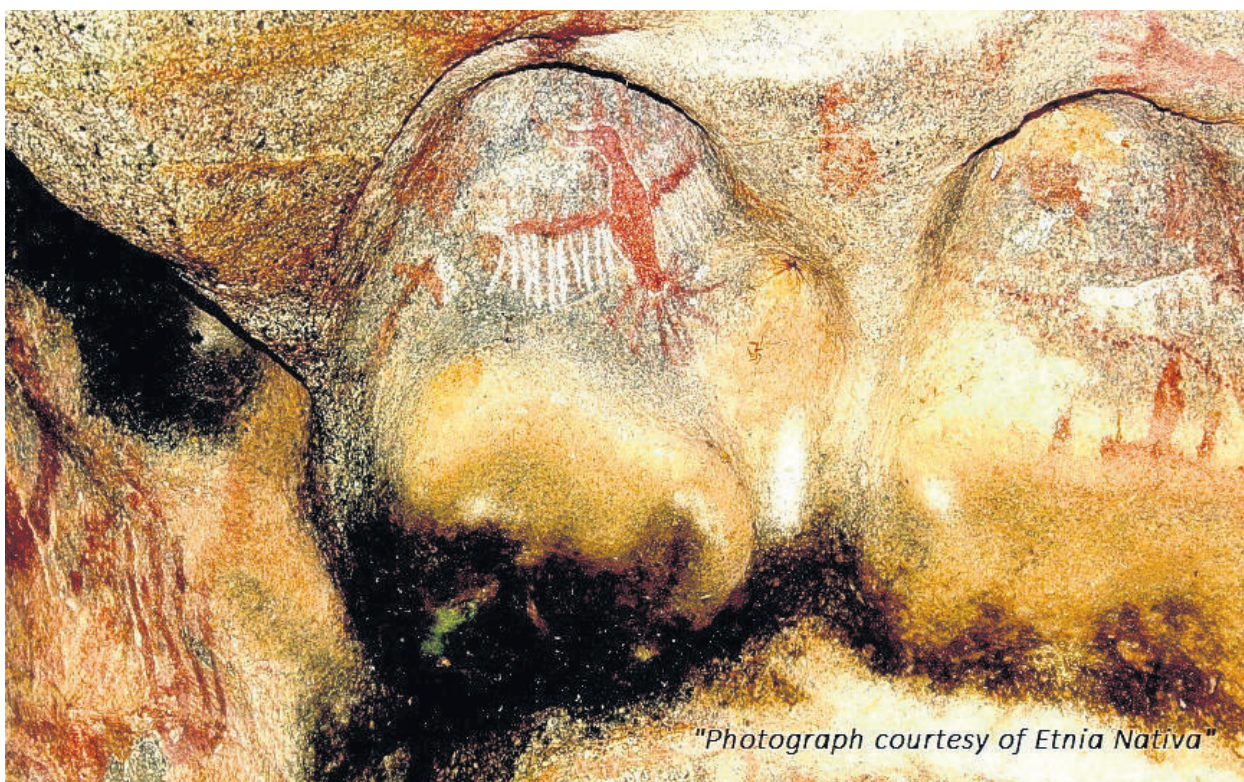
ing migrations through Bering.

In a world that moves at breakneck speed, prehistoric rock art reminds us to slow down. It asks us to simply listen, absorb, and appreciate the gentle sound of the waves—often stirred by strong winds—the morning calls of nature, and perhaps most precious of all, the sound of silence. We, the natives of Aruba, deeply value our stone heritage. Many of these monumental structures served as shelters from wind, heavy rains, and the sun, or as social gathering places where our ancestors shared the island's first stories. Even today, despite vandalism and harsh weather, this heritage still speaks to us. The question is: are we listening? The world already is. Every mark etched in stone, every symbol painted on cave walls, speaks across time—and demands that we honor it. To listen is to remember, to protect, and to carry forward the stories of those who came before us.

For visitors eager to immerse themselves in Aruba's true identity, Etnia Nativa provides an unparalleled cultural experience. Since 1994, it has blazed trails, shaping projects such as Arikok National Park, the Archaeological Museum, and the Artisan Foundation. Each visit is more than a tour; it is a chance to feel the island's spirit through stories that resonate, and stir the soul.

During your vacation, let yourself be transported into Aruba's ancient world, where art, history, and spirituality intertwine, and experience the island as its first inhabitants did—through Etnia Nativa.

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"Photograph courtesy of Etnia Nativa"

The Aruban way of life: Creating community with Cas di Torto

(Oranjestad)—The Aruban people understand that a happy life is spent in great ambience with your loved ones. Passed down from one generation to the other, building community has been a key aspect in forging our traditions and customs. The Cas di Torto (mud house) played a big role in cultivating community, bridging families together and forming close bonds with your neighbors—something we highly value today.

Cas di Torto: History and construction

The origin of the Cas di Torto is said to date back to the early 19th century in the Paraguaná Peninsula in Venezuela. Refugees who sought sanctuary on Aruba introduced this building method to the island.

The uprights of the walls were made with sturdy and straight wayaca or kwihi wood, or from thin mangrove struts. Then, the wattle walls were weaved in using branches and twigs from the wareto and sisal plant, daubed with a mixture of grass and mud. Finally, the walls got a coat of white plaster to seal everything in.



For roofing, com stalks, palm fronds and straws were used, allowing air to flow freely through the house. This method of roofing was known throughout the ABC islands (Aruba, Curacao, Bonaire), but the use of com stalks in Aruba eventually got replaced with use of mud and white plaster for the roofs. The white plaster all around made the houses look like cake, hence the name “Torto” (Spanish for “cake”).

Building community

Building Torto houses was often a community effort. Young couples who were about to get married had to have their house built before they could tie the knot and start their own family. This is where the help of the community comes into play.

Neighbors, extended family and friends would all help in the construction of a Torto House. And everyone had a role: The men oversaw the building of the house, and the women were tasked with collecting wood and straws, cooking and taking care of the little ones.

The couple's family were primarily responsible for feeding everyone who helped build the house. Before construction, someone usually had the task to prepare the meal; going fishing or slaughter farm animals like goats, chicken or sheep. Even the older kids had their tasks; the older children of the family usually helped with collecting water and mixing the mud.

The average duration of



constructing a Cas di Torto was 4 months.

At the end of a long day of work, everyone would gather around and enjoy a feast of hearty food. This type of help from friends and family became a tradition and was called “paga lomba”: You help me today; I'll help you tomorrow. Nowadays, traditional Cas

di Torto are rare, especially those that are still inhabited. Houses that do exist probably date back more than a century.

Picture credits: Aruba National Library (BNA) and the Monument Bureau archive on Coleccion.aw

Fun facts about the ‘Lisinbein’

The ‘Lisinbein’ (*Scolopendra gigantea*), also known as the Giant Centipede, is one of the largest centipedes in the world and is found in Aruba. Its size and hunting prowess make it a fascinating, if often misunderstood, creature.

Despite its fearsome reputation, it plays a crucial ecological role that often goes unnoticed.

As an apex invertebrate predator, *Scolopendra gigantea* helps maintain balance in the ecosystem. Moreover, they themselves are a food source for birds such as the Crested Caracara (Warawara) and the Aruba burrowing owl (Shoco).

It controls populations of

smaller invertebrates and even small vertebrates, ensuring that no species overpopulates, which could disrupt local biodiversity.

Its presence can indicate a healthy, functioning ecosystem. Its sensitivity to environmental changes makes it a bioindicator of ecological balance.

It can reach an impressive length of up to 30 centimeters (approx. 12 inches) and live for around 5 to 10 years in the wild. Its size and longevity makes it a significant and long-term part of the ecosystem.

A mother's love

In *Scolopendra* species, the ‘mother’ typically exhibits maternal care by curling around her eggs

and newly hatched young. She stays coiled around the clutch, protecting it from predators and fungi, which are serious risks in the moist environments these centipedes often inhabit. The mother maintains a clean environment for the eggs by carefully grooming them, which helps prevent fungal growth that could endanger the brood. This behavior may continue until the young centipedes have undergone their first molt, making them more capable of independent survival.

This form of parental care is beneficial in increasing the survival rates of offspring, as the mother's protection provides a safe ‘environment’ during their vulnerable developmental stages.



It's a fascinating adaptation because it shows a form of care that resembles more complex behaviors observed in vertebrates.

No bark, but all bite!

The lisinbein is known locally for having a really painful sting. While venomous, the Lisinbein is generally not aggressive toward humans

unless provoked. Its role as a guardian of balance in the ecosystem helps protect the natural beauty of Aruba by keeping the ecosystem in harmony.

Editor's note: Information and pictures provided by Ms. Natasha Silva from the Aruba Conservation Foundation.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 43 Thesaurus

1 A heap author

6 Small 44 Beholds
fastener 45 Winter

10 Uncon- gliders
trolled fear

11 Dutch 1 DOWN
bloom 1 Stretches

13 Fury over

14 Yoga 2 "Be quiet!"

pose 3 Trig topic

15 Zero 4 Game

16 Boxing 17 Ignited

great 20 Batter's

Muham- high hit

mad 21 Leaving

18 Fellows 24 Annoy

19 Measuring 25 Musical

by walking ranges

22 Make a 26 Word of

choice honor

23 Smell 8 Stylish

24 Opium 9 Want

flower badly

27 Impas- quintet

sioned online

28 Beige

29 Sewing

aid

30 Making a

short visit

35 Scol's cap

36 Pants part

37 Way off

38 Argentina-

set

musical

40 Fill with

joy

42 Varnish

ingredient



AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

1-23 CRYPTOQUOTE

U Q L T G M E N H N I T N X Q P N

(X C J N M S Q O Q L M V N). C E ' P

M X T M S P Q O L P N X U T N U C Y I C Y

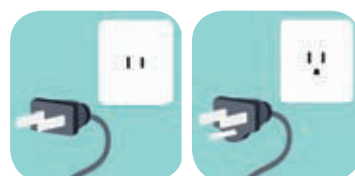
E G N P N M. — N . N . B O V V C Y F P

Cryptoquote: HOW WONDERFUL IT IS THAT NOBODY NEED WAIT A SINGLE MOMENT BEFORE STARTING TO IMPROVE THE WORLD. — ANNE FRANK

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier, mostly around 2pm.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the



Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE

02 SAT	CARIBBEAN PRINCESS	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C
05 TUE	CELEBRITY SILHOUTTE	Arrival: 08:00 Departure: 17:00 Berth: B
	CARNIVAL MAGIC	Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C
06 WED	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 11:59 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
12 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B
	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
19 TUE	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B
	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
20 WED	ALLURE OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 16:00 Berth: I
	CARNIVAL VISTA	Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 16:00 Berth: C
21 THU	CARNIVAL VENEZIA	Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C
26 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B
	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

	1			9		7		
		3		2	7			6
	9	2	1				5	
2	6				8	4		7
9	4							3
		1	4	7				
	2	6		1	3		7	
	7	9					3	5
5				6		2		

Difficulty: ★★★

5/20

Answer to previous puzzle

6	4	9	5	2	1	8	7	3
7	8	5	9	3	6	1	2	4
3	2	1	8	4	7	9	6	5
8	3	7	6	9	4	2	5	1
4	1	6	2	8	5	3	9	7
5	9	2	1	7	3	4	8	6
1	6	8	3	5	2	7	4	9
9	7	3	4	6	8	5	1	2
2	5	4	7	1	9	6	3	8

Difficulty: ★★

5/19

Spacecraft to probe how Earth fends off raging solar winds



This photograph shows the Smile spacecraft (gold) fixed to a Vega-C rocket adaptor (black cone) on 25 March 2026, in Kourou, French Guiana, in preparation for liftoff from Europe's Spaceport.

Paris, France

A joint European-Chinese spacecraft is set to blast off Tuesday to investigate what happens when extreme winds and giant explosions of plasma shot out from the Sun slam into Earth's magnetic shield. Particularly fierce solar storms can knock out satellites, threaten astronauts and create colourful auras in the skies of northern and southern latitudes.

To find out more about this little-understood space weather, the van-sized SMILE spacecraft is tasked with making the first-ever X-ray observations of Earth's magnetic field.

The spacecraft is scheduled to launch on a Vega-C rocket at 0352 GMT on Tuesday from Europe's

spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana, on the northeastern coast of South America.

Lift-off was originally planned for April 9, but was postponed due to a technical issue.

SMILE or the Solar Wind Magnetosphere Ionosphere Link Explorer is a joint mission between the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

"What we want to study with SMILE is the relationship between the Earth and the Sun," explained Philippe Escoubet, an ESA scientist working on the project.

- Here comes the Sun -

Solar wind is a stream of charged particles shot out from the Sun. Sometimes

this wind is kicked up into a huge storm by massive eruptions of plasma called coronal mass ejections. Hurtling at around two million kilometres (1.2 million miles) an hour, these powerful blasts take a day or two to reach Earth. When they arrive, Earth's magnetic field acts as a shield, deflecting most of the charged particles. However during particularly intense events, some particles can penetrate our atmosphere, where they have the potential to take out power grids or communication networks. They also create dazzling auras known as the northern or southern lights. □

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Oranjestad: Eagle
Tel. 587 9011

San Nicolas: Centro Medico
Tel. 584 5794

OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850
Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police 100
Police Oranjestad 527 3140
Police Noord 527 3200
Police Sta. Cruz 527 2900
Police San Nicolas 584 5000
Police Tipline 11141
Ambulance 911
Fire Dept. 115
Red Cross 582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas 587 5900
Prof. Taxi 588 0035
Taxi D.T.S. 587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba 583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv. 280 2828

AID FOUNDATIONS

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FAVI- Visually Impaired
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Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989
Against Domestic Violence(FCVR)
Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433
Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

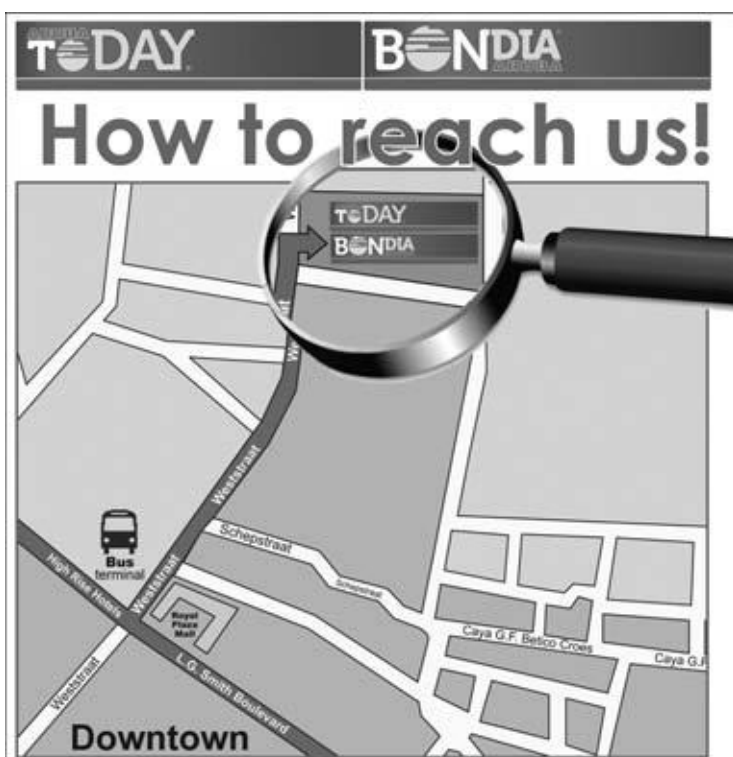
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS



Nicaragua's exiled Sergio Ramirez: Autocrats 'don't care' about novels

Panama City, Panama

Authoritarian leaders are not concerned by the political impact of novels despite literature's power to shape people's consciences, said Nicaragua's former vice president and writer Sergio Ramirez in an interview with AFP on Monday. The Cervantes Prize winner, who lives in exile in Spain after having been stripped of his Nicaraguan citizenship for criticizing the government, is in Panama to chair the Centroamerica Cuenta literary festival.

The author of "Margarita, esta linda la mar" (Margarita, How Beautiful the Sea), "Castigo Divino" (Divine Punishment), and "Tongolele no sabia bailar" (Tongolele Did Not Know How to Dance) also faces criticism in Nicaragua over his nomination for a seat on the Royal Spanish Academy due to his position as Daniel Ortega's vice president between 1985 and 1990.

Q: In "Tongolele no sabia bailar," it says that fear rules. What role does literature play in a Central America where authoritarian governments are re-emerging?



Nicaraguan writer Sergio Ramirez, 84, walks inside the hotel where he is staying in Panama City on May 18, 2026.

A: I don't think that authoritarian leaders in Central America care about novels, except when they feel that one is aimed at them. In such cases, they order a crackdown on the book, more out of personal revenge... than because they think it will destabilize them. A novel is not capable of creating a collective consciousness.

Q: Can a novel be used as

a weapon?

A: I wouldn't be so bold as to think that a novel could change a country's reality, but it can change a reader, and I think that's very important that a reader learns to see reality in a different light through a fictional work.

Q: Does the reality of Central America shape its writers?

A: No matter how much

one learns to write a love story, one will always come up against reality -- not just that of political power, but also of the other arbitrary powers that exist in Central America. The power of organized crime, corruption, and drug trafficking -- these things alter a person's story, change their relationship with society and instill fear.

Q: Is there a distinct Central American literature?

A: It is the same literature with different nuances in language, structure and themes. Central American literature, after all, is political not in an ideological sense, much less in a partisan one, but rather because of the abnormal reality of Central America's political structures.

Q: What does your nomination for a seat on the Royal Spanish Academy mean for Central American literature?

A: It is the culmination of a literary career dedicated to language. The fact that I have been invited to join such an important cultural institution and that I was born in Central America is a significant step for Central American literature.

Q: But you have also faced criticism?

A: I don't pay much attention to them (critics)... They are part of a very small minority faction within Nicaragua that wants to give this nomination a political slant it does not have. What the academic community values is my heritage, my cultural background, and whether or not I contribute to the language. □

Fraught marriage of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera at heart of dreamy opera

New York, United States

Like a macabre scene from one of her vivid canvases, Frida Kahlo holds Diego Rivera in her arms as he dies at the foot of a gaunt red tree, their silhouettes framed by blue curtains, at the end of an opera devoted to their tumultuous relationship.

Sung in Spanish, "Frida and Diego: The Last Dream" is being staged for the first time at New York's Metropolitan Opera starting Thursday, before an international cinema broadcast May 30.

The 2022 opera is not a biopic, but a "fantasy," said American composer Gabriela Lena Frank, who



Carlos Alvarez as Diego Rivera and Isabel Leonard as Frida Kahlo perform on stage during a dress rehearsal of Gabriela Lena Frank's "El Ultimo Sueño de Frida y Diego" at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, on May 11, 2026.

worked with Cuban-American playwright Nilo Cruz. The story is set in 1957, three years after Kahlo's

death, in the final hours of Rivera's life as he is haunted by regrets about their stormy relationship, his in-

fidelties, their inability to have a child together, and how he overshadowed his wife's career while she was still alive.

Their posthumous reunion a way to find "redemption," Cruz said happens on the occasion of Dia de los Muertos, Mexico's celebration of the dead, when Kahlo seeks her husband in the world of the living and a chance to paint again. "Latinos, you know, we're in a very difficult moment right now," Frank said. "It's incredible to me that this is when a cultural institution like the Met Opera is celebrating a deeply Latino story."

The opera draws visual inspiration from Kahlo's paintings, which were sometimes overshadowed by Rivera's monumental murals while she was alive but have now made her work the most expensive art made by a woman in the world.

Her 1940 painting "The dream (The bed)" set the record for the price of a woman's painting, selling for \$54.6 million in 2025. In tandem with the opera, New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) is also showcasing Kahlo and Rivera's drawings and paintings, in dialogue and in a setting inspired by the opera. □



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Victor Wembanyama #1 of the San Antonio Spurs looks to pass the ball against Chet Holmgren #7 of the Oklahoma City Thunder during the fourth quarter in Game One of the NBA Western Conference Finals at Paycom Center on May 18, 2026 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Wembanyama dazzles as Spurs top Thunder in double-overtime thriller

Los Angeles, United States Victor Wembanyama outdueled Shai Gilgeous-Alexander to lead the San Antonio Spurs to an epic 122-115 double-overtime triumph over the Oklahoma City Thunder in game one of the NBA Western Conference finals on Monday. Wembanyama scored 41 points and pulled down 24 rebounds, forcing the second overtime with a dazzling three-pointer and delivering nine of the Spurs' 14 points in the second overtime as San Antonio handed the defending champion Thunder their first defeat of these playoffs. "It was, like, sheer willpower," 22-year-old Wembanyama told broadcaster NBC. The French star played 49 minutes, producing a pair of dunks and a crucial block late in the second overtime to seal the victory. With the triumph at Oklahoma City's Paycom Center, the Spurs stole home court

advantage in the best-of-seven series that will send the winner to the NBA Finals. Wembanyama admitted the sight of Thunder star Gilgeous-Alexander receiving his second straight Most Valuable Player trophy before the game made the clash more personal "for sure". He earned Defensive Player of the Year honors but finished third in the MVP voting announced on Sunday. Spurs coach Mitch Johnson said the sight of Gilgeous-Alexander lifting the MVP award "100%" motivated his star. "He's competitive," Johnson said. "If you're a competitor and you see another competitor get rewarded with what you want..." But "Wemby" said the main message of the night was that the young Spurs "are ready to go in any environment, in any place, against anybody."

"And even though we've still got a lot to learn, our effort should be over anybody else's and tonight we were relentless." Rookie Dylan Harper, starting in place of injured De'Aaron Fox, scored 24 points and snagged seven steals for San Antonio. Stephon Castle added 17 points and 11 assists as the Spurs extended their season dominance of the Thunder. Oklahoma City, trying to become the first team to repeat as champions since Golden State in 2017 and 2018, piled up a league-best 64 regular-season wins but dropped four of five contests against the Spurs who won 62 regular-season games to return to the playoffs for the first time since 2019. Gilgeous-Alexander was limited to 24 points, shaking off a sluggish start to key the Thunder's bid to rally from a 10-point fourth-quarter deficit. □



INEOS Grenadiers Italian rider Filippo Ganna competes during the 10th stage of the Giro d'Italia 2026 - Tour of Italy cycling race, 42km individual time trial between Viareggio and Massa on May 19, 2026.

Italy's Ganna wins time-trial in Giro shake-up

Massa, Italy

Italy's Filippo Ganna won the stage 10 time-trial at the Giro d'Italia on Tuesday, as overnight leader Alfonso Eulalio clung on to the pink jersey. Eulalio now leads race favourite Jonas Vingegaard by just 27 seconds, an advantage that had been over six minutes when the Portuguese rider took control after last week's rain-lashed stage five. Eulalio had led by over two minutes overnight but looked set to lose the pink jersey on Tuesday before rallying in the latter half of the long time-trial. "I suffered, suffered and suffered," said Bahraini vicious climber Eulalio. "But here I am still in the lead." Ineos rider Thymen Arensman had a great day and climbed to third at 1min 57sec while Felix Gall dropped to fourth at 2min 24sec. Australian Ben O'Connor climbed to fifth at 2min 48sec.

The potentially decisive stage was held on a flat 42km coastal run between Viareggio and Massa on the Tuscan coast.

This was an eighth Giro stage win for Ganna, seven in the time-trial, and the 1min 52sec winning margin speaks for itself.

"This was built for me," said the former track specialist who like Tuesday's runner-up Arensman rides for Ineos. "This is the result of the work the team did this winter." A picture-postcard run, the same route which often features on the Giro warm-up race the Tiro-Adriatico, included two long, straight stretches meaning power rather than technique was the order of the day.

While Ganna's win was expected, so was the shake up in the overall standings with Jai Hindley and Gall losing time.

Wednesday's stage 11 is a hilly affair with Eulalio tipped to keep the overall lead as far as the weekend mountain stages. □

Two-time champion Alcaraz withdraws from Wimbledon with wrist injury

Madrid, Spain

Carlos Alcaraz's hopes of regaining his Wimbledon title have been dashed with the two-time champion announcing Tuesday he is withdrawing as he recovers from a wrist injury.

"My recovery is going well and I'm feeling much better, but unfortunately I'm still not ready to play, I am obliged to withdraw from both Queen's and Wimbledon," said Spaniard Alcaraz, who lost to Jannik Sinner in last year's final in the All England Club.

"These are two really special tournaments for me and I'll miss them a lot. We'll keep working to come back as soon as possible."



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz gestures after losing against Russia's Andrey Rublev during the 2024 ATP Tour Madrid Open tournament quarter-final tennis match at Caja Magica in Madrid on May 1, 2024.

triumph in Paris and London.

He lost top spot following his defeat by Sinner in the Monte Carlo Masters final on April 12.

The seven-time Grand Slam winner triumphed at Roland Garros in 2024 and 2025. He saved three championship points against Sinner last year in the longest French Open final in history.

The Italian, who has never won the French Open, may be able to capitalise on Alcaraz's absence. This year's tournament runs from May 24 to June 7.

Alcaraz won his first Wimbledon trophy in 2023, defeating seven-time champion Novak Djokovic in the final and successfully defended his title against the Serb the following year.

This year's Wimbledon championship runs from June 29 to July 12.

"It's sad news for all of us, me being a competitor you want to play against the best players in the world and he's definitely the best player on this surface," Sinner had said after Alcaraz's withdrawal from the French Open.

"Being that young, like he is and like I am, we need to look at our bodies first before worse things (happen)."

Last month, Alcaraz insisted that he would not risk a premature return.

"I'd rather come back maybe a bit later, but in great shape, than come back quickly and risk making this injury worse," he explained.

"I have a long career ahead of me, so I'm not afraid to miss what I have to miss in order to recover as well as possible."

sible."

Alcaraz sustained the injury during the first round of the Barcelona Open last month and subsequently pulled out of tournaments in Madrid and Rome and then Roland Garros, where he is the reigning two-time champion.

The world number two became the youngest man to complete the career Grand Slam in January with his triumph at the Australian Open. The 23-year-old holds a 22-3 record this season and also won a title in Doha.

Wimbledon will be only the third Grand Slam that Alcaraz has missed since making his main draw debut at the 2021 Australian Open. The Spaniard withdrew from the 2023 edition in Melbourne with a hamstring injury.

- Sinner rivalry -

Alcaraz's wrist injury has stopped him continuing his exciting rivalry with Italian world number one Sinner, 24, who is firm favourite to

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